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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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7590

05/09/2006

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EXAMINER

HO, DUC CHI

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2616

DATE MAILED: 05/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/673,959

Applicant(s)

MOOS ET AL.

Examiner

Duc C. Ho

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 February 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 8-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 8-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

Claim Objections

1. Claim 1-21 are objected to because of the following informalities: Applicant is suggested to have all claims, or the claim sheets separated from any comment attached to the same page of which the claims are submitted.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103© and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

4. Claims 8-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Modell ("Application of Data Acquisition and Power Control to Regional and Central

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Control System", by D.J. Modell, Advances in instrumentation and control, Vol. 48, Part 02, 1993- IDS record), in view of Yuji (JP 10051473-IDS record).

Regarding claim 15, Modell discloses an arrangement for the control of a hydro-electric power utility system and application of control techniques and data acquisition between a central control center and remote terminal units, etc., see abstract. The hydro power station control system is composed of three regional control centers-fig.1 distributed in 22 hydro power stations. Each regional control center handles five (5) loops (corresponding to channels), wherein at each loop a maximum of five hydro power stations are controlled, see page 1104.

A plurality of communication channels (a total of 15 loops (or 15 channels) from the central control center to regional control centers to 22 hydro-power generating stations-fig. 1) *divided into communication groups* (centers 1-3, fig.1), *wherein the communication channels within a communication group have the same communication properties* (the loops or channels are for control and data acquisition),

a substation associated with a first communication group (a hydro power station 11-1-1A associated with the center 1-fig. 1);

a central station coupled to the plurality of communication channels, the central station operable to acquire meter reading over a channel (the central control center couples to the channels operable to acquire data from the hydro power station).

Modell, however, does not expressly teach (a) determine whether any communication channel of the first communication group is free, and (c) waiting and repeating the step c if it is determined that no communication channel of the first communication group is free.

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One skill in the art would recognize the advantage of examining new approaches to control of Power Utility projects at unmanned locations by exploiting the latest connectability of the hardware and software for control in order to provide efficiency, savings in power utilization, and maintenance for a non-continuous operation. A new system may employ features such as checking periodically the monitored data on shared channels instead of dedicated channels or loops.

Yuji discloses access control method of communication system in which a master station communicates to a slave station of a plurality of slaves in an available channel. A free channel is monitored and assigned to a slave by a reception part 13- see figure and/in the abstract (corresponding to (a) and (c)).

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to combine Modell and Yuji.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been to provide efficiency, savings in power utilization, and maintenance for a non-continuous operation by implementing features such as checking periodically the monitored data on shared channels instead of dedicated channels or loops.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Modell with Yuji to obtain the invention as specified in claim 15.

Regarding claim 16, in Modell at each regional control center (group), DEC VAX computers serving as host computers are employed at each power generating station, wherein each computer is communicated with by its memory address.

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Regarding claim 17, in Modell the central control center is also a DEC VAX computer, and the computer is capable of storing busy information for the free channel from the Yuji's reception part 13.

Regarding claim 18, in Yuji a frame containing a mode flag is used for an indication of busy channel.

Regarding claim 19, in Modell the central control center DEC VAX computer is capable of storing busy information of a channel as a code word in a memory address.

Regarding claim 20, in Modell the operating system of the central control center DEC VAX computer is capable of storing busy information.

Regarding claim 21, in Modell the central control center DEX VAX computer is capable of storing busy information in a software, i.e., an algorithm which determines the availability of a channel for communication.

Regarding claim 8-14, these claims have similar limitations as claims 15-21, respectively. Therefore, they are rejected under Modell-Yuji for the same reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 15-21.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 2-21-06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Modell in figure 1 illustrates an arrangement for information transmission for remote reading of data from hydro power station, and this arrangement may be used for acquiring electricity meters over a communication system.

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Duc Ho whose telephone number is (571) 272-3147. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm.

If attempt to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wellington Chin, can be reached on (571) 272-3134.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-2600.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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8. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Patent Examiner



Duc Ho

11-08-05